

# HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING

**APPROVED** Minutes

September 17, 2020

## Meeting occurred via WebEx Teleconferencing

Chair Ford called meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

**Commissioners Present:** Bob Ford (Chair), Scott Markow (Vice Chair), Lynda Earle (Vice Chair), Bianca Chang, Mabrooka Chaudhry, Joan Hash, Peter Hwang, Johnathon Di Pietro, Joshua Kaufmann, Gabriel Terrasa, Leslie Salgado-Tamayo, and Kui Zhao.

**Staff Present:** Yolanda F. Sonnier (Executive Secretary)

**Legal Counsel:** Melissa Goldmeier

**Meeting Attendees:** N/A

### **I. PUBLIC FORUM**

No Public present

### **II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Joan made a motion to approve the July 16, 2020 minutes. Kui 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. All Commissioners in attendance voted in favor of accepting the minutes as distributed. **July 16, 2020 minutes were approved.**

### **III. CHAIR'S REPORT – BOB**

- Bob mentioned according to the Legislative Report, CR-142 will be brought up. On September 20, 2020 public hearing will be held to hear CR-142 and will be voted upon in beginning of October. CR-142 concerns the Racial Equity Task force which has been proposed in front of County Council. If anyone wants to make a motion in support of this Resolution, it will be taken into consideration.

### **IV. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY REPORT**

Yolanda mentioned that we have less cases in the office than usual. Yolanda suspects the employment cases are fewer because employees are out of the office for employment cases. Yolanda suspects that Housing cases numbers are down because there were no evictions. Yolanda reported that we have 51 cases in the office. 43 cases are active, 8 cases are pending closures, and we had 11 inquiry in August. Yolanda reported LGBTQ workgroup's next meeting is October 20, 2020 and is looking for committee members to serve. Yolanda reported that La Alianza Latina workgroup was just formed by the County Executive and will address needs and concerns of the Hispanic community. Gabriel will be the representative from HRC to participate with La Alianza Latina workgroup. The first meeting is September 29 at 6:00 p.m. Yolanda also reported that the County Executive made an executive order and changed Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day in Howard County. Yolanda also reported that Bystander Intervention and Cultural Awareness Training continues to be offered by OHR and the next training is September 29, 2020. Humanity Matters dialogue series took place starting in August and is wrapping up

on September 22, 2020. Yolanda reported there were 4 HBIs in the month of August, 3 Anti-Black and 1 Anti-White. Leslie Salgado mentioned that she and others community members were not informed about the County Executive's Press Conference about La Alianza prior and she expressed her concern. Bob Ford questioned Joan about this year's Harriet Tubman event and Joan reported that the County is renovating the Harriet Tubman building so the event should occur next year instead in September. Yolanda also reported that the Office of Human Rights has two job openings; Compliance Officer position and Equity and Restorative Practices Manager.

## **V. STUDENT REPORT**

Jonathan reported that over the summer he met with Superintendent of HCPSS and others to discuss ability to use preferred names in virtual school for transgender and non-binary students. Also, suggested a LGBTQ+ curriculum in schools. Jonathan reported that he requested information from HCPSS via MPIA regarding Hate Bias Incidents, the school's response was incomplete due to privacy issues. Jonathan questioned how we might secure the information that is being withheld. Joshua responded and suggested HRC draft a letter to the Superintendent emphasizing the importance of this issue and urge that information be provided. Joshua also mentioned that students should be informed they may come to OHR to make Hate Bias reports. Bob suggested that we can invite the Superintendent to one of the HRC meetings. Joan suggested that we be more specific about what information we want in the information request to the school and try to negotiate with the school system, so we can obtain the information we need, but not violate privacy. Lynda suggested to reach out to Montgomery County to see what their protocol is regarding reporting HBIs. Also, Lynda suggested to reach out to individual principals and schools. Also, Lynda suggested Jonathan reach out directly to the Howard County Police Department. Jonathan mentioned some input from the public, specifically youth, mentioned that we need to make things a more uniform format or easier to read on social media. Jonathan discussed progress of advocating for student rights to peaceful protest on HCPSS properties and student rights to expression of freedom and assembly.

## **VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **a. Nominating: No report.**

**Awards:** Bianca mentioned we have a total of 18 nominations and final decisions have been made as far as winners. Bianca shared that the business award this year is going to the Horizon Foundation. Bianca mentioned that Mr. Jumel Howard won the award as an individual for the work he has done in the LGBTQ and black communities. Bianca also mentioned that Erika Strauss Chavarria won for the second individual award by providing food in the community and works with the Columbia Community Care group and much more. Bianca mentioned that the HRC should start a nomination category for students especially, as one nominee especially stood out this year, Charmaine Yuan. The HRC awards ceremony is October 22, 2020. The next HRC meeting is October 15, 2020. Bianca mentioned that there will be a meeting with the County Executive to take photos with award winners at 11:30 am 10/1 at the George Howard Building. All HRC commissioners are invited. The photos will be shared at the virtual HCR award celebration. Markow made a motion to approve three awardees for 2020 HRC awards and Kui seconded the motion. All members approved, and motion passed unanimously. Bianca made a motion to Create new student award category with age cut off 26 years old and Scott seconded the motion. Kui will abstain from vote. Bianca made a motion to award the first inaugural student Human Rights award to Charmaine Yuan and Joshua seconded the motion. The motion passed.

**b. Outreach:**

Mabrooka reported that in June, outreach work was done with Asian-Americans of Howard County. Also, Mabrooka reported that she is working with Chaunta in developing informational pamphlets for HRC. Leslie reported that she has secured more contacts for a master list of contacts for purposes of spreading an awareness of HRC and OHR. Yolanda mentioned the name of OHR will change to Office of Human Rights and Equity soon. Yolanda reported that we are doing two OHR informational sessions, one in Korean on October 8, 2020 and one is Spanish on October 13, 2020.

**c. Civic Participation (Census/Voting):**

Kui reported that for census that the deadline reverted back from October to September. Kui reported that about 80% of people in Howard County have participated in the census. Kui reported that signs were placed around the parks to help remind residents to participate in the census and voting.

**d. Hate Crimes:**

No report.

**e. Legislation:**

Scott reported that he sent out a written report. Scott mentioned CR-142 that is a resolution to start a racial equity task force to study and submit recommended actions to close racial disparities in our community. Scott mentioned that a public hearing will take place on September 21, 2020 regarding this resolution. Scott also mentioned CB-51 prohibits Howard County Department of Corrections from accepting into its custody individuals who have been detained by ICE and be held by Howard County Dept. of Corrections. HRC is being tasked to recommend or not whether to continue the Howard County contract with ICE. Scott mentioned there is a public hearing on this on September 21, 2020. Scott mentioned that this bill may be voted upon as early as October. Scott also mentioned a civil rights issue in congress which established a commission for social status black men and boys in the US commission on civil rights who will conduct a study of the condition of black men and boys in the United States.

**f. Immigration:**

Joan clarified that she is the chair of the subcommittee and Joan confirmed that reports given by other members were accurate. Joan did not provide a report this meeting. Peter mentioned that their report should be coming out in less than a month. Peter mentioned that their report has taken a long time because of all the interviews they have had to conduct. Peter and other HRC members discussed the different options HRC may take in support regarding CB-51 which relates to Howard County's contract with ICE.

**VII. NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Yolanda mentioned that an appeal today was made, and the appeal will be forwarded onto the HRC to be considered in the October meeting.

**VIII. CLOSED SESSION**

Kui made a motion to move to closed session and Joan seconded that motion. Yolanda performed roll call and all members voted yes to move to closed session.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

- Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Kui and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Joan. All Commissioner voted in favor meeting adjourned.
- Meeting Adjourned at 8:37 pm